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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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## ***EMERGENT LEADERS PROGRAM CELEBRATES 24 NEW GRADUATES***

PHOENIX- Governor Janet Napolitano today announced the graduation of 24 early childhood professionals from the Chase Emergent Leaders program, a successful professional development program for those working in early childhood health and development.

“Upon completion of the Emergent Leaders program, graduates are truly recognized as experts in the early childhood education field and become leaders in their community,” Governor Napolitano said. “Skilled early education professionals will help prepare the state’s youngest residents for success in kindergarten and beyond.”

The Chase Emergent Leaders program helps enhance management and leadership skills, increases leadership and professional development opportunities, and provides participants with a forum for collaboration and networking. This is the fourth class to graduate from the program.

The graduates are a diverse group of professionals who work in programs ranging from Head Start to private child care, public schools and faith-based child care. While previous classes have been geared towards classroom teachers, this year’s graduating class is made up of directors and assistant directors of child care, preschool and other early childhood programs.

The program is offered through a partnership between the Governor’s Office and Southwest Human Development, the state’s largest provider of early childhood programs. The program is funded by Chase Bank with additional support from the Arizona Early Education Funds.

Including this year’s graduating class, approximately 100 early childhood professionals from across Arizona have participated in the program. Many graduates credit the Chase Emergent Leaders program with providing continuing personal and professional benefits that include improved self-confidence, better performance in their careers, the opportunity to apply their newly learned advocacy skills, the motivation to return to school for advanced coursework, and the opportunity for professional networking.

### **2008 Early Education Emergent Leaders Graduates**

- Victoria Armstrong, Shiloh Community Church, Phoenix
- Andrea Benkel, The Summit School of Ahwatukee, Phoenix
- Kristina Bliss, Mesa Community College Children’s Center, Mesa
- Sheila Espino, Western Arizona Council of Governments Head Start Program, Yuma
- Lois Fisher, The Sycamore School, Mesa

- Corrine Glynn-Cakebread, Valley Childcare and Learning Center, Glendale
- Christina Jenkins, St. Anthony of Padua Catholic School, Casa Grande
- Pamela Kharbanda, Tiny Tots Preschool and Childcare, Mesa
- Tera Leigh, Pinal Gila Community Child Services/Apache Junction Head Start, Apache Junction
- Lorraine Lewis, Serendipity Day Care, Casa Grande
- Ashley Lewis, Valley Childcare and Learning Center, Chandler
- Cari McMinn, Bridges Early Childhood Education, Apache Junction
- Lela Messick, Easter Seals Blake Foundation, Tucson
- Katherine Mike, Navajo Head Start, Tuba City
- Teresa Morton, Central Arizona College Child Development Center Superstition Mountain Campus, Apache Junction
- Yvette Narvais, Valley Childcare and Learning Center, Surprise
- Tamara Paganini, Prince Head Start, Tucson
- Vennila Ramadoss, Kids World Learning Center, Chandler
- Alexis Rios, Blake Foundation Palomita Children's Center, Safford
- Susan Shinn, Flowing Wells School District, Tucson
- Dee Tamminen, St. Anne Little Flower Montessori School, Gilbert
- Harolyn Tussing, All Together Now Preschool and Child Care, Mesa
- Sara Van Slyke, Desert Spring Children's Center, Tucson
- Melinda Wilhelms, Southwest Human Development, Phoenix

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